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BOOK REVIEWS

A Retrospect of Fifty Years. By James Cardinal Gibbons. Baltimore: John Murphy Co., 1916. Vols. i and ii. Pp. xv + 335; pp. vii + 287.

These two fine volumes, bound in cardinal red, are from the pen of the foremost Churchman of the United States. They contain the history of some of the more noteworthy events in which His Eminence of Baltimore has taken a prominent part. This *Retrospect of Fifty Years* has all the charm of an autobiography and all the authority of a well-written and well-documented history. It gives us an intimate insight into the mind of this great prelate and citizen. In the Introduction, Cardinal Gibbons tells us that he has put together this selection of essays and sermons with the thought that they might be valuable for the history of the four score years it has pleased God to spare him to the American nation. "I have lived a long time," he says, "and I have lived through a very critical time. Not only have I held office many years, but I have held office during a time of transition, when the old order was changed." At the present time, there are few survivors in the episcopate who can remember the strenuous times depicted in the first eight chapters of these volumes which contain the Cardinal's personal reminiscences of the Vatican Council. "I am the last living Father of the Vatican Council. Now, alone upon this earth, I can report what happened within those sacred walls—not by hearsay, nor from books, but from what I actually saw and heard."

His Eminence was born in July, 1834, in Baltimore. His preliminary education was obtained in Ireland and later he entered St. Charles' College, then at Ellicott City. He made his philosophical and theological studies at St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, and was ordained June 30, 1861. For the next few years he labored on the missions in Maryland. On August 18, 1868, he was consecrated Bishop of Adramyttum and Vicar-Apostolic of North Carolina. He was transferred to Richmond, July 30, 1872, and was appointed coadjutor of Baltimore, 1877.

He became Archbishop of Baltimore and Primate of the Church in the United States, October 3, 1877, and was created Cardinal Priest, June 7, 1886. It was while he was Vicar-Apostolic of North Carolina that His Eminence attended the opening of the Vatican Council in Rome, December 8, 1869. At that time the Catholic Bishops of Christendom, resident and titular, numbered about 1,200. Every continent, every island of importance, every nation on the face of the globe, except Russia, was represented by its hierarchy. It must have been a most striking and gratifying sight to this young bishop from the United States, and in the reminiscences which he has given us with his usual and clear style, we can see how wonderfully skilled the officials of Rome were in handling this great crowd of ecclesiastics. While they were gathered at Rome, war had broken out between France and Prussia, and while they were preparing their decrees for the peaceful organization of the Church's future life, the troops were massing on the frontiers of France, and the land of the eldest daughter of the Church was being reddened with the blood of two of the most powerful nations of the time. In his *Diary*, which occupies six chapters of the first volume, the Cardinal takes us step by step through all the work of the Vatican Council and gives us a close view of the discussions which took place on the all important question of Papal Infallibility.

One interesting passage in these chapters is that describing the difference of opinion among the prelates:

"The difference of opinion that existed among the bishops on the subject of the infallibility is known throughout the four quarters of the globe. What was the cause of it? If anyone imagines that all those who joined in opposing a definition from the outset were actuated by the same motives, he would certainly be wide of the mark. While the main point of the controversy was held by the ultramontanes without exception, and there was but the one question as to the formula to be used, the opposition, as they were generally called, taken all together, had no fixed principle of accord, save an agreement to disagree with the defining the doctrine as of faith. To analyze the constituent parts of this body we shall class them according to ideas.

"The first class comprise those who, believing the doctrine themselves, or at least, favoring it speculatively, did not think

it capable of definition, not deeming the tradition of the church clear enough on this point.

"A second class, the most numerous, regarded the definition as possible, but practically fraught with peril to the church, as impeding conversions, as exasperating to governments. For the sake of peace, and for the good of souls, they would not see it proclaimed as of faith.

"All of these dissident prelates, we are bound to say, acted with conscientious conviction of the justice of the cause they defended. They were bound in conscience to declare their opinions, and to make them prevail by all lawful influence. If on one side or the other of this most important and vital question, they went beyond the limits of moderation, or used means not dictated by prudence or charity, it is nothing more than might have been expected in so large a number of persons, of such varied character and education. Instead of being shocked at the little occurrences of this nature, we should rather be struck with admiration at the self-restraint and affability which were shown, despite the intensity of feeling and strength of conviction. In a word, that the Council of the Vatican did not break up many months ago in disorder and irreconcilable enmity, is because it was God's work, and not man's; it was because charity ruled in it, in spite of defects, and not the passions that govern the political debates of men. The earnest desire all had of a mutual good understanding was evinced on occasion of the speech of a well-known cardinal which, though not approved by all, gave evidence of a sincere desire for conciliation and agreement. The effect was remarkable; a thrill of pleasure went through the assembly, for the moment each one seemed to breathe freely, and to hail his words as harbingers of peace in the midst of excitement and anxiety."

There are passages in all these chapters which are alive with that strong virile delineation and with that extraordinary ability His Eminence has already shown in clarifying the most difficult and most intricate problems in doctrinal and historical matters. Apart from this very valuable contribution to Church History—and there is no doubt that all future historians of the Church will use these chapters as sources for their description of the Vatican Council—the Cardinal has reprinted what he considers

to be the more weighty of his papers and sermons during these past fifty years. These may be divided into sermons for Church celebrations, such as consecrations of cathedrals, dedications of churches, centenary celebrations, golden jubilees, funeral orations, and other special essays which might find a fit place in a volume on Church and State in the United States. Many will be glad to have here within reach the text of His Eminence's Letter to Cardinal Simeoni on the Knights of Labor. It is not necessary to enter into the difficulty which arose in Canada over the proposed condemnation of the Knights of Labor, but what is of value for American history is the staunch protection which His Eminence gave to the Society at a time when it looked as though it would be condemned by Rome. There is no doubt a close connection between this important letter and the famous encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. Together with this letter are two other essays: *The Church and the Republic*, and *The Church's Work for the Republic*. Seldom have any two state papers ever reached the same height of patriotism as is contained in these essays. The first of them is an answer for all times to the difficulty which some still see between civil and ecclesiastical allegiance. Probably the most quoted passage of the Cardinal's writings is that passage which begins:

"American Catholics rejoice in our separation of Church and State; and I can conceive no combination of circumstances likely to arise which should make a union desirable either to Church or State. We know the blessings of our present arrangement; it gives us liberty and binds together priests and people in a union better than that of Church and State. Other countries, other manners; we do not believe our system adapted to all conditions; we leave it to Church and State in other lands to solve their problems for their own best interests. For ourselves, we thank God we live in America, 'in this happy country of ours,' to quote Mr. Roosevelt, where 'religion and liberty are natural allies.' "

Among the many chapters of these volumes to which special attention might be drawn is that on the *Silver Jubilee of the Catholic University* which was delivered at St. Patrick's Church, Washington, April 15, 1916. The Catholic University was instituted in 1887, and Cardinal Gibbons, as Archbishop of

Baltimore, became its first Chancellor. The University has been, as he has always considered it, his most sacred trust; and during its life of a quarter century he has been its principal guide and its faithful support. In the growth of the University, he says, "Twenty-five years is but as a day; in the life of the individual, it counts for much more. I regard it as a special favor granted me by Almighty God that I have been permitted to devote so much of my time to this sacred cause. From the beginning, the University has been for me an object of deepest personal concern. Through its growth and through its struggles, through all the vicissitudes which it has experienced, it has been very near to my heart. It has cost me, in anxiety and tension of spirit, far more than any other of the duties or cares which have fallen to my lot. But for this very reason, I feel a greater satisfaction in its progress. I feel amply compensated for whatever I have been able to do in bearing its burdens and in helping it through trial to prosperity and success."

It is but fitting that the last chapter of this *Retrospect* should carry the mind of the reader to the joys and the happiness that await the faithful servants of God in the world to come.

Some one has well said that no one has been so scrupulously careful in his speeches and writings as His Eminence of Baltimore, and in all things he has written and said during the past fifty years, there is undeniably a wisdom and a foresight, a sympathy and an intelligence, scarcely paralleled in the whole history of the Church. The volumes are dedicated to the Rector and Faculties of the Cathloic University of America. We predict a large sale for these two volumes, which should be in every library, public and private, in the land.

The Sulpicians in the United States. By Charles G. Herbermann, LL.D., Emeritus Professor of Latin in the College of the City of New York, Editor-in-chief of the Catholic Encyclopedia, President of the United States Catholic Historical Society. New York, The Encyclopedia Press: 1916. Pp. 368.

Historical quest among the books in the library of Dunwoodie Seminary brought to Dr. Herbermann an acquaintance with Sulpicians which ripened into intimacy and fructified in this